

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

## **Ghost of Miles Hard-castle, The Scarlett Arms, at Marsden Heights Nelson Lancashire**

In the quiet Lancashire town of Marsden Heights, the echoes of history reverberated through the cobbled streets and the time-worn buildings. Among these stood The Scarlett Arms, a venerable establishment with a rich past that seemed to seep through its very foundations. The pub's patrons often whispered about the ghost of Miles Hardcastle, the former landlord and brewer who was said to roam its halls, forever tethered to the place he had once called home.

Miles Hardcastle, a figure of local legend, was known for his robust demeanor and his unwavering dedication to crafting the finest ales. He had once been the heart and soul of The Scarlett Arms, overseeing both the libations and the laughter that flowed within its walls. His rugged hands had toiled over barrels of malt and hops, transforming humble ingredients into liquid gold that warmed the souls of all who partook.

It was rumoured that Miles had also held court at The Scarlett Arms' predecessor in the nearby village of Thursden. He had been both the landlord and the brewer there, a dual role that he carried with pride. Tales of his brewing prowess spread far and wide, drawing thirsty travellers from distant lands who had heard whispers of his exquisite creations.

As the years rolled on, Marsden Heights embraced a changing landscape. The Farmer's Arms at Southfield, now known as Nelson, had its own share of stories to tell. Local lore suggested that it, too, had harboured a brewery of its own, a hidden gem nestled within its walls. The secrets of its brewing legacy had become obscured over time, but the spirit of camaraderie and community that Miles Hardcastle embodied lived on.

Not far away, the inn at Cold-well stood as a silent witness to the ebb and flow of time. Once a bustling hub for weary travellers and jovial revelers, it had likely shared in the tradition of brewing its own ale. The whispers of those bygone days were carried by the wind, a haunting melody that lingered in the air.

The Massey family, a name steeped in the traditions of brewing, added yet another layer to this tale. Their legacy traced back to the 18th century, a time when the alchemy of fermentation was practiced with reverence. Though the Massey name would eventually be synonymous with brewing, the exact origins of their business remained shrouded in mystery. The Holgate family and the ill-fated partners Tattersall and Crook were potential threads in the intricate tapestry, their stories intertwining with the destiny of Massey's.

And so, the ghost of Miles Hardcastle continued to wander the halls of The Scarlett Arms, a silent guardian of its brewing heritage. His presence was felt in the clinking of glasses and the hearty laughter that filled the pub's cosy corners. The Scarlett Arms, The Farmer's Arms, Cold-well Inn, and the legacy of Massey's all converged in a timeless dance, a symphony of history that echoed through the ages, reminding the townspeople of Marsden Heights that the past was never truly gone.

By Donald Jay